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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF-ESTEEM OF PARENTS AND THE SELF-ESTEEM OF THEIR CHILDREN

BY

CHRISTOPHER EDWARD DOUGLAS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1990

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C. Douglas
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Edmonton, Alberta

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED The Relationship Between The Self-Esteem of Parents' and the Self-Esteem of Their Children SUBMITTED BY Christopher Edward Douglas IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY.

Dr. G. W. Fitzsimmons

Prof. M. A. Bibby

Dr. B. Munro

Date: August 1990

ABSTRACT

This study compared the relationship of the self-esteem of parents, and the self-esteem of parents and their children. 44 two parent volunteer families were selected from an Edmonton elementary-junior high school. The grade level of the children involved in the study ranged from three to eight. Both the parents and their children were administered separate forms of the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory for Adults and Children. The results of the Total scores and the General and Social subscales were correlated using a Pearson product-moment correlation. No significant correlations were evident between the parents' self-esteem scores, or between the parents' and children's self-esteem scores. These findings suggest that social learning may not be a major contributor to self-esteem acquisition, and have some implications for teaching and counselling children low in self-esteem.

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This project originated through discussions with Dr. James Battle. His willingness to share his time and his many insights on self-esteem were highly valued throughout the project. I also wish to extend my gratitude to my thesis adviser, Dr. George Fitzsimmons, for his ability to keep me focused on the topic, and the caring and supportive attitude he showed me, a neophyte researcher. Also, my other committee members, Dr. Brenda Munro and Professor Mary Ann Bibby, provided me with sound advice that resulted in a more solid, comprehensible study.

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The writing of these acknowledgements brings to a conclusion a season of my life. And just as a crimson rose petal slips delicately to

the ground signalling the end of the season; I too feel completed. Although the end of season has arrived, the promise of a fresh new beginning awaits.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Research Questions	3
Definitions	4
Thesis Outline	4

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Perspective	6
Defining Self-Esteem	8
Variables Related to Students' Self-Esteem	10
Development and Acquisition of Self-Esteem	14
Development	15
Acquisition	16
Parents' and Children's Self-Esteem	17
Summary	24

CHAPTER III: METHOD

Method	27
Subjects	27
Materials	30
Procedure	33
Limitations	35

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Results of Research Questions	37
Subsidiary Analysis	40

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Summary of Results and Discussion	46
Discussion of Subsidiary Analysis	50
Theoretical and Practical Implications	51
Theoretical	51
Practical	53
Future Research	54

REFERENCES	55
APPENDIX A	59
APPENDIX B	60

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1	Grade Distribution of Students	29
TABLE 2	Means and Standard Deviations of Parent Self-Esteem Scores	37
TABLE 3	Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of Mothers' and Fathers' Self-esteem Scores	38
TABLE 4	Means and Standard Deviations of Children's Self-Esteem Scores	39
TABLE 5	Correlations of the Self-Esteem Scores of Parents and the Self-Esteem Scores of Their Children	40
TABLE 6	A Comparison of Group Mean Scores with Their Sons' and Daughters' Mean Scores	41
TABLE 7	Analysis of Variance of Children's Self-Esteem Scores by Grades	41
TABLE 8	Analysis of Variance of Groups of Parents' Self-Esteem Scores and Their Sons' Self-Esteem Scores	43
TABLE 9	Analysis of Variance of Groups of Parents' Self-Esteem Scores and Their Daughters' Self-Esteem Scores	44
TABLE 10	A Comparison of Parent Groups With Their Sons' and Daughters' Mean Scores	44
TABLE 11	Means and Standard Deviations of Children's Self-Esteem Scores According to Whether or Not Their Parents Participated in the Study	45

I. INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem has been a popular topic of discussion for over a century. The potential influence of self-esteem on personality development has prompted numerous research projects. As self-esteem research is compiled, different information about its nature continues to be discovered. This chapter will provide: An overview of self-esteem research, the definition used in the study, and an outline of the thesis.

The impact of self-esteem on people's behaviour has been the subject of many psychological and sociological writings. Early writers on self-esteem, like William James (1890), suggested that self-esteem could potentially shape one's entire perception of his or her world. Although for many ensuing decades self-esteem continued to be mentioned by numerous theorists and writers, detailed research was lacking. Seeking a more thorough understanding of self-esteem, researchers proceeded in earnest in the 1960's. Psychologists and sociologists were not alone in this pursuit as educators also became involved in the research. Educators have since heralded the importance of self-esteem to education, and it is now considered to be an integral part of learning and social development in this field.

Our present understanding of self-esteem, therefore, is derived from the results of numerous writings and research projects. Two seminal studies on self-esteem by Rosenberg (1965) and Coopersmith (1967) examined in detail many factors related to the development of

self-esteem in children. Their results have since been expanded by other researchers in a number of different areas. One such area involved examining two contemporary theoretical explanations, social learning and symbolic interactionism, to determine their influences on self-esteem development. Family related self-esteem studies have been another popular area of study.

Until recently, however, much of the self-esteem research on families involved comparing traits and behaviours of parents with the self-esteem levels of their children. Although many significant results were obtained, quite often the researchers failed to include more than one child and one adult from a family in their samples. Consequently, by excluding some family members, much of our information on parents' and children's self-esteem was incomplete. Also, many of the researchers in this area neglected to study the self-esteem of parents along with the self-esteem of their children. The researchers, therefore, did not adequately consider that an important relationship may exist between the self-esteem of parents and the self-esteem of their children. As a result, we have little knowledge of the self-esteem levels of individual parents and how their levels compare with the self-esteem levels of their children. Findings from the few existing studies on this topic are contradictory, resulting in an obscure understanding of the relationship between parents' and their children's self-esteem.

Further research on this topic is necessary to provide a more precise understanding of self-esteem as it relates to parents and

parents and their children. For example: Do the children of parents with low self-esteem necessarily have low self-esteem? Also, the results of this study will provide additional information that may be useful for counsellors working with children with low self-esteem. In addition, the findings of this study will help readers to clarify the role of social learning in self-esteem development.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between parents' (spouses') self-esteem and the relationship between individual parents' self-esteem and their children's self-esteem. Correlating the Total, General, and Social self-esteem scores of parents and parents and their children provided this information. The sample used for this study was composed of volunteer parents and children from an Edmonton public school.

Research Questions

This study addressed two main questions.

1) What is the relationship between the self-esteem scores of parents (spouses)?

2) What is the relationship between the self-esteem scores of parents and the self-esteem scores of their children?

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, self-esteem was defined as:

> An individual's perception of their own worth. An individual's perception of self develops gradually and becomes more differentiated as he [or she] matures and interacts with significant others. Perception of self-worth, once established, tends to be fairly stable and resistant to change. (Battle,1987, p. 23)

This definition was chosen because it is consistent with the manner in which self-esteem is used in the measurement instruments.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is organized in the following order:

1) Chapter one outlines the background and significance of the problem. Also included in this chapter are the research questions, the limitations of the study, and the definition of self-esteem that was used in the study.

2) Chapter two reviews relevant literature on self-esteem. It includes a historical perspective of self-esteem and describes variables relevant to the development and acquisition of self-esteem.

3) Chapter three describes the design of the study. It contains a detailed explanation of the subjects, procedures, and instruments used.

4) Chapter four presents the data and the results of the study. Also incorporated in this chapter is a description of the subsidiary

analysis.

5) Chapter five discusses the findings, implications, and suggestions for further research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since a great many articles continue to be written on self-esteem, a thorough understanding of all of its components continue to evolve. Self-esteem measures have been included in a wide array of studies. This chapter, however, reviews the literature relevant to parents' and children's self-esteem. It is divided into the following sections: historical perspective, defining self-esteem, variables related to students' self-esteem, development and acquisition of self-esteem, and parents' and children's self-esteem. This chapter concludes with a summary of the most significant findings.

Historical Perspective

Self-esteem has been included in numerous studies and theories in psychology. As far back as 1890, William James wrote about self-esteem relating to human aspirations and values. He felt that high self-esteem resulted when people's achievements equalled their aspirations in areas of personal importance. G. H. Mead (1934), a noted sociologist, added to the understanding of self-esteem by elaborating on its social components. It was his belief that one's self-esteem is constructed from the reflected appraisal of significant others. These appraisals are derived from, and relative to, the values of the participant's social group.

Self-esteem has also been recognized by many notable

psychological theorists including Adler (1927), Fromm (1947), and Rogers (1951). Each of these theorists viewed the self and self-esteem from different perspectives. Briefly, Adler viewed low self-esteem to be the consequence of individuals perceiving themselves to have weaknesses, which resulted in feelings of inferiority. Rogers, however, recommended that a type of open acceptance, which he labelled unconditional positive regard, be practiced by parents. He felt that this technique would allow children the opportunity to respect and trust themselves, which would ultimately result in self-acceptance. Fromm stressed the importance of children reaching a level of confidence and independence in self-esteem development. These levels resulted from the children being involved in stable, trusting relationships.

Of course, many other authors and researchers have added to the understanding of self-esteem. Coopersmith (1967), in his book titled The Antecedents of Self-esteem, summarized many of the writings of the more prominent self-esteem authors including Morris Rosenberg (1965). His research summary stated that four major factors contribute to self-esteem development:

1) The amount of respectful, accepting, and concerned treatment that an individual receives from significant others in his life.

2) The history of successes and the status and position we hold

in the world.

3) How the individual interprets experiences relative to his or her values and aspirations.

4) The individual's manner of responding to devaluation.

Historically, the quest to understand self-esteem has shifted from theoretical explanations to research. Both Rosenberg's (1965) and Coopersmith's (1967) research provided many answers about self-esteem development. Since these two seminal studies, research has continued in many areas not included in previous research. Most of these studies, however, offer a unique definition of self-esteem.

Defining Self-Esteem

Many variations on self-esteem definitions have been proposed by authors. To date, no single definition exists that has been accepted by all writers. There are, however, commonalities to these definitions that allow for at least a ubiquitous understanding, if not a definition, of self-esteem. Initially, however, we must clarify the confusion that often arises when self-esteem and self-concept are used interchangeably. Most, though not all, theorists distinguish between self-esteem and self-concept.

Beane and Lipka (1986) defined self-concept as: "The description of self in terms of roles and attributes" (p. 5). They also made it clear that self-concept is a description and not a value

judgment by the individual.

Battle (1987), as previously mentioned, explained self-esteem as:

> An individual's perception of their own worth. An individual's perception of self develops gradually and becomes more differentiated as he [or she] matures and interacts with significant others. Perception of self-worth, once established, tends to be fairly stable and resistant to change. (p. 23)

Searcy (1988) succinctly sums up the distinction between self-esteem and self-concept by stating: "A person's self-concept is made up of the ideas he[she] has about him[her]self, an assessment of his[her] skills and traits, whereas self-esteem is how much he[she] feels he[she] is worth" (p. 454).

Battle (1987) demonstrated how self-esteem is composed of subjective, evaluative, and multifaceted dimensions. He adopted a phenomenologist perspective and stated that it is the subjective perception of the experience that regulates self-esteem. Subjectivity, he explained, is bound by individuals perceptions of, and the values they assign to, their experiences. How much individuals value the events they are involved in will influence how much emphasis they place on the importance of succeeding at it. This, in turn, affects their self-esteem. He gave the example of high achieving students who

based their self-worth on obtaining top grades. They became distraught and perceived themselves to be dumb when they did not achieve excellent marks on all assignments. Additionally, Battle (1987) asserted that self-esteem is not determined by a single phenomenon but is multi-faceted. This idea is accepted by many self-esteem researchers as evidenced by the inclusion of different subscale measures in their instruments. Lastly, Battle mentioned that, although self-esteem stabilizes around ten years of age, changes can occur throughout one's lifetime.

Variables Related to Students' Self-Esteem

This section is included in the review of the literature because variables related to students' self-esteem could potentially affect the results of the study. If, for example, self-esteem correlated highly with intelligence, then it would be prudent to control for this variable in the design of the study.

Intelligence has been shown to correlate significantly but not highly with self-esteem. Coopersmith (1967) conducted a very thorough study of variables associated with self-esteem. His sample consisted of 85 pre-adolescent (ages 10-12), white, middle class males. This sample represented subjects from five differing groups according to scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) and ratings by their teachers. These subjects were administered the

Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), and the results were correlated with their scores on the CSEI. The outcome indicated that, with all but one group, the self-esteem ratings rose with the intelligence level. The exception to this was the group that scored low on the CSEI but was rated high by their teachers. This group scored the highest of all groups on the WISC.

Coopersmith reported a low but significant correlation (r = .28) between intelligence as measured on the WISC and self-esteem scores. He noted that the groups he constructed differed significantly on their overall level of intellectual ability but cautioned that, even though intelligence is related to self-esteem, one should not assume that it is the most important variable.

Two other studies compared intelligence as measured on the Lorge-Thorndyke Intelligence Test with separate self-esteem instruments and reported different results. Simon and Simon (1975) reported significant correlations between the CSEI and the Lorge-Thorndyke Intelligence Test on both the Verbal and Non-verbal measures. Battle (1981), however, reported no significant correlations existed between self-esteem as measured by the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory and intelligence scores on the Canadian Lorge-Thorndyke Intelligence Test. These studies suggest that intelligence exerts a moderate yet inconsistent influence on children's self-esteem.

Achievement, similar to intelligence, showed a low but significant correlation in Coopersmith's 1967 study. His method of determining the achievement scores, however, must be considered. One of the questions that the participants were instructed to complete asked for their present achievement level in the form of a letter grade (e.g., A, B+). These scores were not verified, and Coopersmith pointed out in his discussion that it was possible not all of the reports were accurate.

Sears' (1970) study of 73 boys and 81 girls in the sixth grade, reported significant but low correlations between high self-esteem and high achievement in reading and arithmetic. The achievement scores for this study must be viewed with caution, also, as they were obtained three years earlier when the same group of children was used by the author for a different study.

Lastly, Simon and Simon (1975) indicated a significant correlation between SRA Achievement Series scores and Coopersmith's SEI. Although the method for obtaining achievement scores was unusual for two of the above studies, they all revealed similar findings, suggesting that a significant but low correlation exists between self-esteem and achievement.

Even though the school studied was composed of students from a limited range of socio-economic backgrounds, literature related to

self-esteem and social class was considered. Coopersmith (1967) declared there was no clear pattern between self-esteem and social class. He found a weak but non-significant correlation between the two variables. Rosenberg's (1965) study of New York high school students, however, revealed significant differences between social classes. The upper class students reported high self-esteem in 51% of the cases, the middle class students 46%, and the lower class students reported high self-esteem in 38% of the cases. Since the majority of the students involved in the present study were from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds, the present author decided not to consider social class as a variable in this study.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) summarized 29 studies from 1955 to 1973 that used a variety of techniques to measure sex differences and self-esteem. Four of these studies exceeded a thousand participants in their samples. They discovered that differences on self-esteem scores between sexes were seldom evident and when they were, females scored higher about as many times as males did. This summary also indicated that the similarity between scores was constant for participants from age three to college age.

Lastly, self-esteem was considered from the perspective of grade levels. The question: Does self-esteem take a sudden jump either up or down during a certain period of development? was

addressed. Both Coopersmith (1967) and Battle (1987) agreed that self-esteem is a gradual development that stabilizes in early childhood. Coopersmith (1975) included in his manual the results of several studies (e.g., Kimball, 1972; Donaldson, 1974) displaying mean self-esteem scores across grades. He stated that, because grade means were similar, there was no need to use separate norms for each grade level with his instrument. Battle, however, indicated in his 1981 manual that although there were no significant differences for students in grades three through six or seven through nine, scores in his junior high sample were significantly higher than for his elementary sample. Thus, he developed separate norms for elementary and junior high students.

Development and Acquisition of Self-Esteem

Battle (1987) claimed that self-esteem is an important part of healthy human development. He asserted, "Self-esteem is a prominent and persistent need that encompasses one's entire existence. Self-esteem affects ones mental health, achievement patterns, and relationships with others" (p. 10). He further contended that self-esteem is the most important determinant of whether individuals achieve their potential. Coopersmith (1975) reiterated its importance and pointed out that children do not innately consider themselves to be bad or good, loveable or unloveable, but that these feelings or images

come about from their interactions with others. Unfortunately, an attribute as important as self-esteem cannot be simply controlled because its development is affected by a variety of influences.

Development

As previously mentioned, self-esteem is considered to develop gradually and stabilize around late childhood. During that time, the child can be influenced by a plethora of experiences within and outside the family. Searcy (1988) stated that initially parents are very influential and lay a foundation for the building of the child's self-esteem. She continued to describe the development of self-esteem as follows. During the early years children learn from their parents (or caregivers) about trust, love, and comfort. As young children mature they begin to form images about who and what they are, depending on their parents both for praise and recognition. The image created about themselves is often largely a reflection of others' appraisals of them. Thus, they begin to view themselves as good or bad, capable or inept, in accord with their early relationships and experiences.

Beane and Lipka (1986) noted that, as the children's sphere of influence widens and they interact more with other significant people such as teachers, neighbours, and friends, they begin to gain insights into their individual strengths and weaknesses. They further stated that as, children reach early adolescence, they become more

introspective and place more importance on the opinions of their peer group. Searcy (1988) felt that at this point children have already begun to filter out experiences that don't conform to their self-images, are less vulnerable to the opinions of others, and have begun to rely on their own standards. She also added that, although the reliance on personal standards increase with age, most people continue to remain aware of others' opinions of them. She cited as an example the need many adult's have for some form of recognition or reassurance.

Coopersmith (1967) clarified the understanding of self-esteem development by providing a general statement about the antecedents of self-esteem in terms of three conditions associated with high self-esteem: " [1] Total or nearly total acceptance of the children by their parents, [2] clearly defined and enforced limits, and [3] the respect and latitude for individual action that exist within the defined limits" (p. 236). In addition to this, he also stated that there was indirect indications that domination, rejection, and severe punishment of children result in lowered self-esteem.

Acquisition

Previously, references (Coopersmith, 1967; Searcy, 1988) suggested that the type of interaction between parents and their children affected self-esteem formation. However, the possible effect of parental modelling on self-esteem was not fully addressed at that

time. Research conducted by Openshaw, Thomas, and Rollins (1983) investigated the acquisition of self-esteem using two different models - social learning (Bandura, 1969, 1977) and symbolic interaction (Becker, 1964; Coopersmith, 1967; Mead, 1934). Although both of these models are complex and intricate, they will be briefly summarized.

Social learning emphasizes the importance of modelling and vicarious learning, inferring that the parents' behaviour plays a key role in the child's formation of self-esteem. Symbolic Interactionism, however, contends that self-esteem is a product of the parents' appraisal of the child's worth. This appraisal is demonstrated to and interpreted by the child during parent-child interactions.

To determine their influence on adolescent self-esteem, these two models were directly compared in Openshaw et al.'s (1983) study of adolescent families. After selecting a stratified random sample of 184 families with adolescents, the researchers assigned variables to represent both social learning and symbolic interactionism models. They concluded the study by stating that each model contributed its own influence and illuminated self-esteem in different ways. To attempt to examine self-esteem from only one perspective severely limited the understanding of the phenomena.

Parents' and Children's Self-Esteem

Previous references have been made to the importance of

parents in self-esteem formation; this section examines studies relating to parents' and children's self-esteem in greater detail. From infancy throughout childhood, children are very dependent on their parents. As a result, parents are considered to be an important component in the development of their children's self-esteem. Battle (1987) acknowledged this and stated that parents, of all possible influences, exert the most control over their children's self-esteem. He explained that parental influences were displayed during the interaction of the parents with their children. Furthermore, Walker and Greene (1986) suggested the quality of the parent-child relationship exhibited influences on self-esteem that continued beyond childhood and into adolescence. This contention, although not directly disputing Coopersmith's (1967) and Battle's (1987) assertion that self-esteem stabilizes in late childhood (because they both recognized that changes can occur throughout one's lifetime), emphasizes the importance of parents in self-esteem formation.

Building on the knowledge that parents are an important part of self-esteem development, numerous studies have examined variables related to parents' and children's behaviour in an attempt to demonstrate a relationship between parental actions and their children's self-esteem. The majority of these studies focused their research on families and related parental issues such as: Parental

support, participation, and control. For instance, Sears (1970) found significant positive correlations between high self-esteem in children and maternal warmth and paternal warmth, and a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and family size. In addition, Coopersmith (1967) demonstrated that a significant relationship existed between high self-esteem children and compatibility between their parents.

Other familial related self-esteem studies have compared the effect of individual parents on their children's self-esteem. In a 1978 study of 21 boys and 21 girls, aged eight to eleven years, Dickstein and Posner (1978) concluded that children's self-esteem was related to the closeness of the parent-child relationship, that boys' self-esteem was significantly related to the relationship with their fathers, and that girls' self-esteem was significantly related to the relationship with their mothers.

Further to this, Elrod and Crase (1980), in a study of the parents of 94 four and five year olds, found that mothers and fathers behaved differently with their sons than with their daughters, and that some of these different behaviours (primarily those based on interactions) were related to self-esteem. The parents in their sample reported that fathers interacted more with their sons than their daughters, whereas mothers interacted more with their daughters than

their sons, but mothers still interacted more with their sons than the fathers did. Mothers also indicated that they behaved more similarly towards both children than fathers did.

Barber and Thomas (1986) added to the understanding of parental and children self-esteem by utilizing a sample of 527 male and female college students. Results of their self-report survey suggested that fathers expressed physical affection differently with their sons than with their daughters, with daughters receiving more physical affection than the sons. The students also reported that both parents expressed more companionship to the same-sex child. The researchers' analysis of the data revealed that daughter's and son's self-esteem could best be predicted using different indicators (e.g., mother's support for daughters, mother's companionship for sons).

The above research intimates that both the type of parent-child interaction as well as which parent was involved in the interaction influences the self-esteem of the child. Battle (1987) also considered the effect of parental roles on children's self-esteem. He stated that in marriage, if the relationship was such that the mother was more dominant and the father more passive, the girl's self-esteem tended to be affected positively and the boy's negatively. The reverse situations also held true: Given a dominant father and a passive mother, the boy's self-esteem were more likely to be affected positively and the

girl's self-esteem affected negatively. Battle believed that both parents behaving democratically would have a positive effect on both children.

The aforesaid research on parents and self-esteem did not consider what relationships exist between parental self-esteem and between parents' and their children's self-esteem. Few studies that clearly delineate these relationships were available; the few related studies that were are summarized below.

Results of research on the relationship of parents' self-esteem were conflicting. In Coopersmith's 1967 study he made the conjecture that women with high self-esteem are more likely to marry men with high self-esteem. This conjecture, however, has not been adequately verified in subsequent research. In a study of parental self-esteem levels, Buri, Kircher and Walsh (1987) examined the relationship of self-esteem scores between 64 parents of college aged students, using total scores from the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965). They reported that a low but significant correlation (r =.284) existed. Block, Block, and Rosenberg's (1984) study used a Q-Sort method to determine self-esteem but did not corroborate the above results. Block et al. reported that no significant correlations existed (r =.06) between the self-esteem scores of 40 intact mother-father pairs. They did not, unfortunately, include any additional demographics about the sample of parents.

Block et al.'s (1984) results were considerably different from Buri et al.'s (1987). These conflicting findings suggest that no clear understanding exists about the relationship of parental self-esteem and that further research is warranted.

Few studies have examined the relationship of self-esteem between parents and their children. Of those that had, most did not include both parents in the study. Coopersmith (1967) reported that mothers of pre-adolescent children with high self-esteem also are inclined to have high self-esteem. These results, however, were obtained by comparing two separate groups using two different methods of calculating self-esteem. The mothers' scores were derived from examiners' subjective evaluations, whereas the children's scores were obtained from a self-esteem inventory. Although the reliability and validity of the self-esteem inventory are known, no such information is provided for the subjective evaluation. Furthermore, neither fathers nor girls were included in the study.

Demo, Small and Williams (1987) utilized adolescents in their study of 139 parent and child dyads yet included only one of the parents. They reported that a significant but low correlation (r =.15) existed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Another related study conducted by Buri et al. (1987) included both parents and

correlated the parents' self-esteem scores with their corresponding college aged child. They reported that no significant correlation existed.

Only one study compared the self-esteem level of both of the parents with their school-aged children. Block et al.(1984) used a Q-sort method for adults and the California Child Q-sort (CCQ) for their children to compare the self-esteem of parents with various personality qualities of their children. With a sample of 65 mothers and 44 fathers, they compared aspects of the adult's Q-sort with the California Child Q-Sort. Using these measures, they found mothers' self-esteem did not correlate with the self-esteem of their daughters or sons. The self-esteem of fathers, however, was shown to correlate significantly with their daughters' self-esteem (r = .50, p = .02) but not significantly with their sons' self-esteem.

Although the Q-sort method of determining self-esteem has shown to be reliable if employed correctly, some difficulties may arise that are not evident with other scales. First, this instrument is somewhat more complicated than other measures and depends on the competence of the examiner for accurate results. Also, this type of procedure does not employ norms and is considered to be difficult to evaluate in terms of standard validity (Harvey 1970). In addition, a caution was issued by its author stating that, because there are 100

significant tests to be computed, there is an increased likelihood of type 1 statistical errors.

Summary

A summary of the literature on self-esteem relating to parents and their children was provided in this chapter. Historically, self-esteem was studied by many noted psychologists and sociologists. Coopersmith (1967) summarized much of the earlier self-esteem research and suggested that four main factors contribute to self-esteem. These four factors were related to a persons' history of successes, interpretation of experiences, responses to devaluation, and the amount of respect and acceptance they received from significant others.

The difference between self-esteem and self-concept was clarified by stating that self-concept was the idea a people hold about themselves, whereas self-esteem is how worthy people feel they are. It was further noted that self-esteem had subjective, evaluative, and multi-faceted dimensions.

Studies relating different variables to student's self-esteem were considered. Most studies indicated that self-esteem has a low but significant correlation with both intelligence and achievement. Whereas no consistent differences were reported between sexes on self-esteem scores, results were conflicting on the relationship between social class

and self-esteem. It was further suggested that self-esteem develops gradually with only minor differences reported on self-esteem scores between grades.

Parents were acknowledged as being important influences on their children's self-esteem development. Their influence on self-esteem was studied from a social learning and symbolic interactionism perspective, and it was concluded that both models contributed uniquely to self-esteem acquisition. Also, it was suggested that parents behave differently with sons than they do with daughters and that this different behaviour may affect self-esteem. Other research indicated that the type of relationship the parents have (e.g., a dominant mother and passive father) may affect girls' self-esteem differently than boys' self-esteem.

Research on the relationship between parents' self-esteem, and parents' self-esteem and their children's self-esteem was conflicting and incomplete. Whereas results of the relationship between parents' self-esteem conflicted, there is a paucity of research on the relationship between parents' self-esteem and their children's self-esteem.

This study addressed two main research questions.

1) What is the relationship between the self-esteem scores of parents (spouses)?

2) What is the relationship between the self-esteem scores of parents and the self-esteem scores of their children?

III. METHOD

Relatively little empirical research has been completed comparing either parental self-esteem levels or parents and their children's self-esteem levels. As a result, there is gap of knowledge in this area of self-esteem. This study was designed, therefore, to further the understanding of self-esteem development in these areas. This chapter delineates the design of the study. It is divided into sections on subjects, materials, and procedures. The reader will find a description of the number and type of subjects, the instruments used to determine self-esteem levels, and how the study was conducted. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the data was organized for analysis.

Subjects

The school chosen for the study was an Edmonton public elementary-junior high school (Kindergarten to grade 9) located in a middle to upper-middle class area of the city. It offered programs in both English and French Immersion. The student population, totalling 500, was predominantly white with approximately 2/3 of its students enroled in the French Immersion program. Of the 500 students, 120 of them were enroled in the junior high program. There were no Special Education classes in the school, and a proportional higher number of students qualified for the gifted program (approximately 8%)

than in other schools within the system (approximately 1 - 2%).

Parents were informed of the intent of the study through a letter sent home with all students in grades three to nine (see Appendix A). The letter requested parents to consult with their spouses and children to determine who was interested in being involved in the study. Eligibility requirements for students to participate in the study consisted of being in grade three or higher and having a signed consent form. Parents willing to participate in the study were asked to include their names on the consent form along with their child(ren)'s name(s). All participants had the option of withdrawing from the study at any time by stating that they no longer wanted to complete the form. The parents were guaranteed that their results would be kept confidential; a record of participating student scores was kept on file for use by the school counsellor.

A total of 238 students participated in the research by completing the self-esteem inventory. Of these, 142 students had at least one parent who agreed to be included in the study. In all, 110 families were involved, of which 44 families had both parents participating. The sample was constructed from the group of 44 families that had responses from both parents participating. Of the remaining 67 one parent responses, 18 were single parent families, and 49 were cases where only one parent had chosen to participate.

The sample was constructed from the group of 44 families that had responses from both parents. This sample was chosen because it allowed the research questions to be addressed most efficiently. These 44 families were composed of 24 sons and 25 daughters. Their grade distribution is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Grade Distribution of Students

Grade	Number of Participants
3	10
4	6
5	12
6	11
7	10
8	2

In five families there was both a son and daughter who participated. In an additional five cases, there were more than one eligible child of the same sex. When this occurred, only the oldest child was chosen to accommodate analysis of the data.

Materials

The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories for Children and Adults (Battle,1981) were chosen to measure the self-esteem of the participants. These instruments had separate forms for children (form A) and adults (form AD). Form A was designed for children in grades three to nine and consisted of 60 items that yielded scores in five subscales (General, Social, Academic, Parents, and Defensiveness) resulting in a total score. The General subscale contained twenty questions, whereas the other subscales were composed of ten questions each. Examples of questions from these subscales are listed below.

General self-esteem:

- I am happy most of the time.
- I often feel that I am no good at all.

Social self-esteem:

- Most girls and boys play games better than I do.
- Boys and girls like to play with me.

Academic self-esteem:

- I am satisfied with my school work.
- Most boys and girls are smarter than I am.

Parental related self-esteem:

- My parents make me feel that I am not good enough.

- My parents understand how I feel.

Defensiveness Items:

- I am never shy.

- I never worry about anything.

The parents' form, AD, was comprised of 40 items divided into four subscales: General, Social, Personal, and Defensiveness. The parents General subscale consisted of sixteen, questions whereas the other subscales each had eight questions. Sample items for the adult form are listed below.

General self-esteem:

- Do you feel you are as important as most people?

- Are you a failure?

Social self-esteem:

- Do you have only a few friends?

- Do most people respect your views?

Personal self-esteem:

- Are you easily depressed?

- Are you as nice looking as most people?

Defensiveness Items:

- Do you like everyone you know?

- Do you ever lie?

Participants responded to the questions with either a yes or no,

whichever represented how they usually felt. Responses were recorded on an answer sheet that was subsequently computer scored. The Defensiveness scale was designed to determine the degree of defensiveness of the participant responses. Since it does not contribute a measure of self-esteem, the present author did not use it to calculate scores for either forms.

This particular instrument was chosen because it had demonstrated acceptable levels of validity and reliability, it had been used in many other research studies (Battle, 1980; Boersma,Chapman & Macguire, 1978; Battle, Yeudall & Blowers, 1987), and it was developed and normed locally. Coopersmith (1975) emphasized the importance of obtaining local norms when using self-esteem instruments.

Concurrent validity of Form A was established with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith,1975). Significant correlations existed, ranging from .66 to .91 for elementary aged boys and girls. Internal consistency coefficients using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR- 20) ranged from .66 to .76 for form A and from .54 to .78 for form AD. Test-retest reliability was reported to be .81 to .89 for elementary students, .91 for junior high students, and .81 for adults. Discriminant reliability was demonstrated for form AD by correlating total self-esteem scores with Beck's (1974) Depression

Inventory. A negative correlation (r = -.55) was reported between self-esteem and scores on the Depression Inventory, suggesting that as self-esteem increases depression decreases.

Procedure

The present researcher attended two school staff meetings and explained to the teachers the intent of the study and the procedure to be followed for administration of the forms. All staff members' questions and concerns were addressed during that time.

Participating students were administered Form A of the inventory by their homeroom teachers during a reading period. Teachers read the instructions on the form and assisted students by clarifying their questions.

Form AD of the inventory was taken home to the parents by their children. Instructions on completing the form, as well as answer sheets, were included in the envelope. The parents were allowed to complete the forms at home on their own time. Once they completed their forms, they returned them in a sealed envelope via their children to the homeroom teacher. The author collected the forms once they were returned.

Family members were assigned a code to ensure confidentiality and to keep track of participants during the marking process and subsequent analysis. All forms were computer marked, and the self-

esteem scores were determined for both adults and children on all the subscales. The results for both the parents and their children, an explanation sheet to aid parents in the interpretation of the findings, as well as a phone number by which the researcher could be contacted to answer any additional questions were included in a sealed envelope marked confidential (see Appendix B). The envelopes were sent home with their children.

The results were organized into family units under the headings of mother, father, son, and daughter. Total scores as well as scores from the two subscales common to both forms (General and Social) were analyzed using a Pearson product-moment correlation. The General and Social subscales were included in the study because they provided additional information on self-esteem levels common to both groups. The Total score was a composite tally of all of the subscales. By virtue of utilizing the results from each of the subscales, it provided the most accurate representation of a person's overall self-esteem level. This overall self-esteem was determined somewhat differently for children than adults because their lives possess unique characteristics. The children's form (Form A) included subscales to measure academics and parental self-esteem levels because these are important, influential parts of their lives. The parents' form (Form AD), however, substituted these subscales with a personal subscale that

measured levels of self-esteem more appropriate to adults. Whereas the Total score measured overall self-esteem levels, the subscales provided results on more specific areas of self-esteem. Lastly, raw scores were converted to percentages to simplify comparisons between forms.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are:

1) The sample consisted of volunteer families from a single school.

2) The sample included only two parent families. Consequently, the size of the sample was reduced and no results were calculated for single parent families.

3) Not all of the children from the families were necessarily included in the study. Children, younger than grade three or older than grade nine were excluded from the study because of the age restrictions imposed by the measuring instrument. Also, when a family had more than one child of the same sex eligible for the study, only the oldest was chosen.

4) The information used to calculate self-esteem scores assumed that participants answered their self-report forms honestly and accurately.

5) Parents completed their forms in a different environment (at

home) than their children did (at school).

Using only volunteers from one school and having a fairly low number of participants has reduced the ability of these results to be generalized. However, keeping the sample limited to one school also contributed to the integrity of the study. Using participants from a limited socio-economic and intelligence (no Special Education students involved) background reduced the potential effect of these variables. This would have been a more difficult process if a larger sample was selected.

By not always including all members of a family, the results do not necessarily reflect the correlations between parents and all of their children. However, each family used in this study contained both parents and at least child and in several families the results of more than one child was included. These are unique characteristic since very few previous studies in this area have managed to do this.

Also, the results of this study depended on the accuracy of the participants in filling out their forms. Lastly, completing the forms in different environments may have influenced their scores.

IV. RESULTS

This chapter provides the findings of the study and addresses the research questions. Five tables are included to assist in clarifying the results. It concludes with a subsidiary analysis section that investigates supplementary queries not included in the research questions.

The first research question of this study stated: What is the relationship of self-esteem scores between parents (spouses)? The means and standard deviations for the parents' scores are included in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Self-Esteem Scores

	Mothers (N = 44)		Fathers (N = 44)	
	Mean (in percentages)	Standard deviation	Mean (in percentages)	Standard deviation
Total	83.736	14.651	85.582	13.002
General	87.784	15.188	87.074	14.605
Social	88.352	15.344	88.636	11.380

The parents' raw scores were compared using a Pearson product-moment correlation. These results are displayed in Table 3. They indicate that no significant correlations existed between the

parents' self-esteem scores at the .05 level. These findings suggest the first research question can be answered by stating that no significant relationships existed between parents' (spouses') self-esteem levels as measured in this study.

Table 3

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of Mothers' and Fathers' Self-Esteem Scores

		Fathers (N = 44)		
		Total	General	Social
Mothers (N=44)	Total	.007	.041	-.170
	General	.003	.037	-.170
	Social	.081	.042	.099

*Significant at .05 level

The second research question of this study stated: What is the relationship between the self-esteem scores of parents and the self-esteem scores of their children? The means and standard deviations for the children's scores are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Children's Self-Esteem Scores

	Sons (N = 24)		Daughters (N = 25)	
	Mean (in percentages)	Standard deviation	Mean (in percentages)	Standard deviation
Total	77.083	15.748	79.600	11.489
General	78.958	16.083	79.200	14.978
Social	70.833	20.198	70.000	21.016

Table 5 presents the correlations between the parents' self-esteem scores and their children's self-esteem scores. The mothers' and fathers' Total, General, and Social self-esteem scores (listed horizontally at the top of the Table) were compared with the sons' and daughters' Total, General, and Social self-esteem scores (listed vertically on the left side of the Table). They indicate that no significant correlations existed between any of the self-esteem scores. These results suggest the second research question can be answered by stating that the self-esteem levels of parents and the self-esteem levels of their children are not significantly related.

Table 5

Correlations of the Self-Esteem Scores of Parents and the Self-Esteem Scores of Their Children

		Mother (N = 44)			Father (N = 44)		
		Total	General	Social	Total	General	Social
Sons (N=24)	Total	-.211	-.160	-.165	-.112	-.130	.073
	General	-.142	-.113	-.130	-.071	-.127	.105
	Social	-.218	-.171	-.258	.014	-.027	-.040
Daughters (N=25)	Total	.136	.071	-.023	.164	.223	.068
	General	.167	.130	.024	.120	.207	.002
	Social	-.022	-.070	-.160	.390	.308	.276

*Significant at .05 level

Subsidiary Analysis

Three additional related questions were considered in this study. The first additional question was: Would significant differences in students' self-esteem scores appear between grade levels? The independent variable for this question was the students' grade level and the dependent variable was their self-esteem scores. The means of the Total (overall) self-esteem scores for students were compared on a grade by grade basis for the entire group of students who participated in the study. The means and standard deviations of these scores are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Children's Self-Esteem Scores By Grades

Grade	Number of participants	Mean (raw scores; total possible = 50)	Standard deviation
3	50	38.26	6.77
4	28	39.14	8.55
5	52	39.21	7.73
6	36	39.61	6.81
7	41	36.07	9.24
8	12	36.17	6.25
9	19	34.47	8.33

An analysis of variance, shown in Table 7, indicated that no significant differences of self-esteem scores existed between individual grades, $F(6, 231) = 1.757$, $p < .05$.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance of Children's Self-Esteem Scores by Grades

Source	D.F.	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F ratio	F prob
Between groups	6	638.52	106.42	1.757	.109
Within groups	231	13991.46	60.57		
Total	237	14629.98			

The second additional question stated: Would parents with high self-esteem scores (mother, father, or both) effect sons' self-esteem scores differently than daughters' self-esteem scores? For this particular analysis the independent variables were: 1) parents with high self-esteem scores, and 2) the gender of their children. The dependent variable was the self-esteem scores of their children.

A rating of either having or not having a high self-esteem, based on their Total self-esteem scores, was assigned to each person in the group of 44 couples that participated in the study. A high self-esteem rating was assigned to parents whose Total score was 27 or greater, as outlined in Battle's (1981) manual. Three groups were formed. Group one consisted of parents where mothers had a high self-esteem rating and fathers did not. Group two had high self-esteem fathers but not mothers and group three was composed of parents who both possessed high self-esteem.

The three groups were compared with the self-esteem scores of their sons and/or their daughters, whichever was applicable. An analysis of variance indicated that no significant differences existed for the sons scores, F (2,18) = .664, $p < .05$ (Table 8), or for the daughters scores, F (2,22) = .880, $p < .05$ (Table 9) between the groups. Although no significant differences in group scores were found and the number of children per group were insufficient to infer

conclusive results, Table 10 indicates the daughters' means were higher and the sons' lower with group one (mothers had a high self-esteem rating but fathers did not) and the sons' means were higher and the daughters' lower with group two (fathers had a high self-esteem rating but mothers did not). Both sons and daughters were highest when both of the parents were rated as having a high self-esteem (group 3).

Table 8

Analysis of Variance of Groups of Parents' Self-Esteem Scores and Their Sons' Self-Esteem Scores

Source	D.F.	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F ratio	F prob
Between groups	2	88.25	44.13	.664	.527
Within groups	18	1196.42	66.47		
Total	20	1284.67			

Table 9

Analysis of Variance of Groups of Parents' Self-Esteem Scores and Their Daughters' Self-Esteem Scores

Source	D.F.	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F ratio	F prob
Between groups	2	58.69	29.34	.880	.429
Within groups	22	733.31	33.33		
Total	24	792.00			

Table 10

A Comparison of Parent Group Mean Scores With Their Sons' and Daughters' Mean Scores

Group	Number of participants	Mean (raw score; total possible score = 50)	Standard deviation
		Sons	
Group 1	5	34.000	10.794
Group 2	4	38.750	10.079
Group 3	12	38.833	6.221
		Daughters	
Group 1	3	39.667	4.619
Group 2	7	37.429	5.160
Group 3	15	40.933	6.160

Group 1 = Mothers with a high self-esteem rating, fathers without a high self-esteem rating

Group 2 = Fathers with a high self-esteem rating, mothers without a high self-esteem rating

Group 3 = Both parents with a high self-esteem rating

The last additional question stated: Would the means for the children's Total (overall) self-esteem scores differ according to the following two groups: 1) parent(s) who participated in the project, and 2) parents who did not participate in the project? The independent variable for this question was parent participation in the study, and the dependent variable was the children's self-esteem scores. A two-tailed T-test was used to compare group means. No significant differences existed between the children's scores in either of the groups, t (238) = 1.42, $p < .05$. The means and standard deviations of the two groups are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations of Children's Self-Esteem Scores of Participating Parents and Non-Participating Parents

	Number of participants	Mean	Standard deviation
Participating parent(s)	143	38.81	7.63
Non-participating parents	97	37.35	8.05

V. DISCUSSION

The central focus of this study was to examine the relationship between the self-esteem of parents and the relationship between the self-esteem of parents and their children. The data gathered from this study will help clarify our understanding of self-esteem and has implications for teachers and self-esteem counsellors. This chapter examines the findings of the study. It is divided into two sections: (1) summary of results and discussion, and (2) theoretical and practical implications. This chapter concludes with a discussion about future research.

Summary of Results and Discussion

Results of the Pearson product-moment correlations suggest that no significant relationships exist between parents' General, Social, or Total self-esteem scores. These findings both support and contend previous studies.

Although the correlations were somewhat lower, the conclusions of this study support Block et al.'s (1984) findings that no significant relationship existed between parents' self-esteem levels. Yet, even though the results of these two studies agree, the lack of demographic details of Block et al.'s sample make it difficult to infer the degree to which these findings can be generalized.

The results of the present study, however, are contrary to the

findings of both Coopersmith's (1967) and Buri et al.'s (1987) studies on parents' self-esteem. Coopersmith (1967) made the conjecture that women with high self-esteem are more likely to marry men with high self-esteem. It must be considered, however, that Coopersmith never verified this conjecture with research, and therefore, it remains unsubstantiated.

Buri et al.(1987) reported a low but significant relationship (r= .284) existed between the self-esteem levels of parents of college aged students. The description of the student population (white and middle class) suggests that the background of the parents in this study were very similar to the parents in the present study. The biggest difference between the two samples is the age of the participants. However, since self-esteem stabilizes in late childhood and remains relatively stable after this point in time, age should not be a factor in an adult sample. Also, Buri et al. used the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) to determine the participants' self-esteem levels, a process quite similar to the one incorporated in the present study. The author is, therefore, unable to account for the differences found between the two studies. The overall results of the above studies, however, still suggest that a high correlation does not exist between parents' self-esteem.

No significant correlations were evident between the parents'

and their children's Social, General, or Total self-esteem scores. The daughters' Social self-esteem results, although nonsignificant, had a correlation of .39 with the fathers' Total score and .308 with the fathers' General self-esteem scores, suggesting that a low relationship existed between these variables.

The lack of significant correlations evident in this study runs contrary to the results of other studies in this area. Coopersmith's (1967) study reported that mothers with high self-esteem ratings tend to have children with high self-esteem ratings. The differences in these results from the present study could be explained by the different methods used in ascertaining parents' self-esteem levels. In Coopersmith's study, the self-esteem levels of the mothers was determined subjectively by examiners through an interview process. Their self-esteem level was classified as being either below average or average to above average. Similarly, the children's scores were reported in general terms as levels (e.g., high, medium, low). In the present study, both the parents' self-esteem scores and the children's self-esteem scores were determined using similar self-esteem inventories. Exact scores were recorded in three different areas. This is a much more specific process yielding more precise results. Because the two studies used strikingly different measurement methods, it makes it difficult to compare results. Furthermore, the two

samples were quite distinct. Coopersmith employed a sample of ten to twelve year old boys, whereas the present study used students of both sexes over a broader age range and included fathers and daughters in the sample.

Demo et al. (1987), in their study of adolescent and parental self-esteem, reported a significant but low correlation (r=.15) between the two groups. Although significant, these findings varied only slightly from the results in the present study. The design of Demo et al.'s study, however, differed in several ways that may account for the small differences in results. Once again, the parent sample was composed of only one parent, althougn fathers constituted 40% of the total participants. The results were reported as a correlation between parents' self-esteem scores and adolescent self-esteem scores, however, the adolescent scores were not differentiated by sex. This did not allow for a comparison of mothers' and fathers' self-esteem scores with their sons' and daughters' self-esteem scores, as was the focus of this study.

The results of the present study may have been quite different if data from only one parent was included and the sex of the children was not considered a variable. Also, the parents and children in Demo et al.'s study completed their forms somewhat differently. In Demo et al.'s study the participants completed their forms under the

same conditions whereas, in the present sample, the children filled in their forms at school and the parents completed their forms at home. It is possible that distractions or influences, such as the children being present when the parents completed their forms, could have affected parental scores. Thus, the environment that the participants completed their forms in could have influenced their results.

My results were comparable to Block et al.'s (1984) findings of the relationship between mothers' self-esteem and their sons' and daughters' self-esteem. They did, however, differ considerably with Block et al.'s results for the relationship between fathers' and daughters' self-esteem. They reported a correlation of .50 between fathers' and daughters' self-esteem levels compared to a correlation of .16 in the present study. Although the method of determining self-esteem scores were different, a thorough understanding of how this difference resulted is difficult without having additional information on the background of the participants in their study.

Discussion and Implications of the Subsidiary Analysis

No significant differences in self-esteem scores were apparent between grade levels. These results support findings by Coopersmith (1967) but differ from the portion of Battle's (1981) findings, which stated that a significant difference existed between the self-esteem scores of elementary and junior high students. Secondly, the

nonsignificant trend of sons and daughters having higher self-esteem when their respective sex parents had high self-esteem suggests that further research could be considered in this area. Lastly, it is interesting to note that no significant differences in self-esteem scores existed between the group of children whose parents participated in the study and the group of children whose parents did not participate. There is a tendency to think that parents who volunteer for these types of studies may be more involved with their children, resulting in higher levels of self-esteem.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical

The findings in this study add to the understanding of self-esteem development. That no relationship was found to exist between parental self-esteem and their children's self-esteem has implications about the role of social learning theory in self-esteem development. Openshaw et. al. (1983) stated that two concepts, identification and self-regulation, connect vicarious learning with self-esteem development. Identification, as related to self-esteem, refers to children internalizing the standards of evaluation and self-reinforcement of significant models, whereas self-regulation involves children evaluating then regulating their behaviour based on these standards. If children adopt standards similar to their parents' standards and

monitor their behaviour accordingly, then it is likely significant positive correlations would exist between the parents' self-esteem and the children's self-esteem. The absence of such correlations in this study suggest that social learning may not be a major contributing factor in self-esteem development.

Alternatively, these findings could have been influenced by a number of the children in the sample being quite young. Being young their self-esteem would still be developing and they may not have yet experienced the full impact of parents as self-esteem models. If this was the case, we would expect older children's self-esteem scores to be more in line with their parents' self-esteem scores. This, however, was not substantiated in Demo et al.'s (1987) study of self-esteem levels between adolescents and their parents, which further implies that parents as self-esteem models do not exert as much influence on their children's self-esteem as other factors do.

The results of this study, however, do not rule out all possible beneficial effects of modelling on self-esteem. For example, Coopersmith (1967) referred to modelling as a possible therapeutic benefit to individuals with low self-esteem. He speculated that high self-esteem individuals may be able to help individuals with low self-esteem by demonstrating alternate methods of behaviour. He did not, however, specify if these individuals could be parents, and he stopped

short of stating that modelling would cause a change in behaviour.

Practical

Information is added to the existing literature on the relationship between parents' self-esteem and parents' and their children's self-esteem as a result of this study. Since little other research has been completed in this area, the findings of this study assist in more clearly defining the influence that parents' self-esteem has on their children's self-esteem.

Additionally, if the effect of parents' modelling is not a major determinant of their children's self-esteem levels, then there are some implications for counselling children who are low in self-esteem. For example, counsellors could forego attempting to change parents' self-esteem levels and concentrate fully on parent-child relationships. This could result in different interaction techniques for the parents and perhaps teachers of the children. The children could be instructed in different ways of viewing experiences. If a model was still considered important to demonstrate alternative methods of behaviour, then perhaps an older student could be utilized.

Lastly, one can infer from this study that even though a child's parent or parents have low self-esteem(s) the child's self-esteem will not necessarily be low; just as importantly, if the parent(s) have high self-esteem the child will not necessarily also have high self-esteem.

Thus, interactions by significant others that will promote positive self-esteem continue to be important to children regardless of their parent's(s') self-esteem levels. This then underlines the importance of teachers' interactions with children. Since they are often considered to be significant figures in young children's lives, they potentially can have a great deal of influence on children's self-esteem levels.

Future Research

In future research, these findings could be tested by enlarging the number of parent participants, as well as the number and age range of child participants. This would not only increase the ability to generalize these results but would also allow for a better comparison of junior high students' self-esteem levels with elementary students' self-esteem levels. By utilizing a larger sample, researchers could explore in greater detail the possibility that children's self-esteem levels may be more influenced by parents of the same gender. In such a study, researchers could examine relationships from three different perspectives : a) parents interacting differently with their children, b) the relationship of dominance and passivity in parents, or c) modelling of the same sex parent. Finally, in additional studies, researchers could compare the relationship of parents' self-esteem and their children's self-esteem in both single and two parent families.

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APPENDIX A

LAURIER HEIGHTS SCHOOL

8210-142 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5R 0L9
Telephone: (403) 483-5352

November 27, 1989

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of our school's goal of creating a positive learning environment, we will be spending more time in the classroom addressing the area of student self-esteem. In order to facilitate this most effectively, we would like to determine what your child's present level of self-esteem is by administering Dr. Jim Battle's self-esteem inventory for pupils in grades 3 - 9 (Dr. Battle is our school psychologist). This is a widely used inventory within our district, and it can be completed in about fifteen minutes in the classroom. There will be one additional question defining who your child usually lives with, eg. mother and father, mother, etc. Once the results are compiled, they will be made available for you to see from our school counsellor, Mr. Ralph Beerwald.

Further to this, Mr. Chris Douglas, our school counsellor from last year, is embarking on a study in this same exciting area as a thesis for his Master's Degree in School Psychology. He is looking for as many parents as possible to complete an adult version of Dr. Battle's self-esteem inventory. It will take about fifteen minutes of your time and can be completed at home. When it is marked, you will receive your results and a confidential report of your present self-esteem level.

Mr. Douglas will be using the results of the parent's inventory in combination with the children's scores to see if a correlation exists between parental self-esteem and child self-esteem. Please discuss this opportunity with your child. Although participation in this project is encouraged, it is definitely optional and is something you may want to decide upon together. Mr. Douglas will also attempt to follow up his research by having Dr. Battle host an evening at our school to explain the results and to speak on the importance of self-esteem and its effects on our lives. If you, your spouse, or both of you, can spare the time and don't mind being part of this study I know that Mr. Douglas would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

G. Tkachyk

G. Tkachyk
Principal

Please return this form as soon as possible.

I give permission for _____ to complete the self-esteem inventory.

I do not want my child _____ to complete the self-esteem inventory.

I/We would_____/ would not____ be interested in completing the adult version inventory.

1) _____ 2) _____

Parent's name and signature Parent's name and signature

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

APPENDIX B

February 5, 1990

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I've recently finished scoring the self-esteem inventories that you and your child(ren) completed. Before I explain a bit about the inventory and the results, I would like to thank you sincerely for participating in my research project. I anticipate having the results of this study available for the school by May.

You and your child(ren) completed separate versions of the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory, compiled by Dr. James Battle. I selected this instrument because it was normed locally, and it has proven to be a reliable and valid measure of self-esteem. With all instruments that attempt to measure human activities, however, the scores can only be reasonable approximations of real experiences and feelings. For example, on some questions you may not have felt strongly one way or the other, or perhaps you never fully understood what the question was asking, but you felt compelled to answer either yes or no. Yet, even with these drawbacks, this inventory can provide some useful information.

The adult inventories are scored in three separate categories (General, Social, Personal), plus one composite score (Total). Dr. Battle has devised the following classifications for the total scores.

Adults

Scale	Very High	High	Intermediate	Low	Very Low
Total	30+	27-29	20-26	15-19	14-0

The childrens' form is similar to the adult form but is scored out of 50 and contains categories labeled General, Social, Academic, and Parents, plus a total score. The classification tables separate elementary from junior high results.

Children

	Elementary	Junior High	Classification
Total	46+	47+	Very high
	40-45	42-46	High
	24-39	33-41	Intermdiate
	13-23	24-32	Low
	12-00	23-00	Very Low

Your scores on the inventory are:

General /16 Social /8 Personal /8 Total

Your child(ren)'s' scores on the inventory are:

Name General /20 Social /10 Personal /10

1.
2.
3.

Parental /10 Total /50

1.
2.
3.

Please feel free to discuss these results with your children. If you have any questions concerning these scores, you may contact me at home, at 452-8379. Also, if you would be interested in attending an evening on self-esteem presented by Dr. Battle, please send the attached form back to the school office. If there is enough response, I will attempt to arrange a time and inform you of the exact date in an upcoming newsletter.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

C. Douglas

Chris Douglas

I would be interested in attending an evening information session about self-esteem at Laurier Heights School.

Number attending _____ Signature_____